

# شهر الرجب و الإسراء والمعراج



## The Month of Rajab و *al-ʿIsrā wa-l-Miʿrāj*

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وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ

WA LA-DḥIKRU-LLĀHI AKBAR

and the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest!  
(Sūrah al-Aʿnākabut 29:45)



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ  
إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا  
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

subhāna-l-ladhi ʾasrā bi-ʿabādihi laylam-mina-l-masjidi-l-ḥarām  
ʾila-l-masjidi-l-ʾaqāṣa-l-ladhi bāraknā ḥowlahu li-nuriyatu min ʾayātina  
innahu huwa-samʿīʿu-l-baṣīr

Glorified be He Who carried His worshipper by night  
from the Place of Inviolable Prostration (*masjidi-l-ḥarām*)  
to the Place of Furthest Prostration (*masjidi-lʾaqāṣā*)  
the neighborhood of which We have blessed  
that We might show him some of Our Signs  
Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing  
(al-ʾIsrāʾ 17:1)

Here we are at the beginning of the journey in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was carried from the *masjidi-l-ḥarām* in Makkah to the *masjidi-lʾaqāṣā* in al-Quds ash-Sharīf and from there to the Cedar Tree of the Furthest Boundary (*Sidratti-l-Munttaha*) (سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى).

This journey on earth and in the heavens occurred in the blessed month of Rajab which is why we are gathered together today to better understand those events and their ramifications for us in terms of some of the forms of ʿibadat in Rajab and to learn more about the blessed night of the ʾisrā wa mirʿaj.

The Prophet said ﷺ, “*rajabun shahṛullāh, shaʿban shahṛu-n-nabi wa ramadān shahṛu-l-ʾummah*”. meaning that “Rajab is the month of Allāh ﷻ. Shaʿbān is the month of the Nabi ﷺ and Ramadān is the month of the ʾUmmah.

The Prophet said ﷺ also said, Rajab is a name of a stream in the Garden, which is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. And if any person fasts for a day in this month he will drink water from this stream.”

The month of Rajab is the light of “*lāā ʾilaha ila-llāh*” while the light of Shaʿbān is “*muḥammadu-rasūlu-llāh*”.

Rajab is also a prelude to Ramaḍān, which follows after the intervening month of Shaʿbān. Therefore, when the Prophet ﷺ sighted the moon of Rajab, he used to make the following duʿāʾ to Allāh ﷻ:

اللهم بارك لنا في رجب وشعبان وبلغنا رمضان

“allāhumma bārik-lanā fī-rajaba wa shaʿbāna wa ballighnā ramadān”

"Oh Allāh, make the months of Rajab and Shaʿbān blessed for us, and let us reach the month of Ramaḍān (i.e. prolong our life up to Ramaḍān, so that we may benefit from its merits and blessings).

It is recommended to fast in the months of Rajab and Shaʿbān as a *naḥilāh* or supererogatory worship, with the intention of following the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ who has established the merit of this fast. As for extra devotions on certain nights of Rajab and Shaʿbān there are no grounds for prohibiting them as the some try to do in our time. Only those with deficient understanding or faith would object to increasing remembrance of Allāh ﷻ on such nights as *laylatu-l-israʾ wa-l-mirʿaj* (الإسراء والمعراج) or on the night of *Nisfu-sh- Shaʿbān* as it is called in the Arabic speaking countries or *Shab-e-barat* as it is called in the Persianate speaking countries.

ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Jaziri's in his book *al-Fiqh ʿala al-madhāhib al-arbaʿa* (Islamic law according to the Four Schools) in a chapter entitled “Fasting Rajab, Shaʿbān, and the Holy Months” writes,

“Fasting the months of Rajab and Shaʿbān is recommended (*mandūb*) as agreed upon by three of the ʾImāms, while the Hanbalis differ in that they say fasting Rajab by itself is disliked, except if one breaks the fast during it – then it is not disliked.”

So we can say that fasting is the pre-eminent ʿibādah of these months but we hope during these three sessions to touch on other ʾibadāt of these month and particularly on the ʾibadāt of the holy nights of light or what are some times called the illustrious nights.

It should be noted here that most of the neo-kharajites (self styled *salafis*, *wahhabis* and their like) are almost universal in their dismissal of any extra ritual practices connected to the month of Rajab.

However there are many traditions among traditional Muslims and the people of *ahl-e-sunnah wa jamʿah* regarding certain practices that are beneficial during the month of Rajab.

The first of these is known as “*aṣ-Ṣalāt of Ragḥāʾib*” which is observed on the night of the first Friday of the month of Rajab or its first night both of which are known as the ‘night of wishes’ (*laylat al-ragḥāʾib*) during which is performed *aṣ-ṣalat al-ragḥāʾib*.

This is performed between Ṣalātu-l-Maghrib and Ṣalātu-l-ʾIṣḥāʾ and it is related that the person who recites Sūrah Ya Sīn before sleep and performs the *ṣalāt of ragḥāʾib* in its time will be saved from the terrors of the grave.

The *ṣalāt of ragḥāʾib* is performed in the following way: Between Maghrib and ʾIṣḥāʾ recite 12 *rakʿat* and in every *rakʿat* after reading Surah al-Ḥamd (*al-fātiḥah*) recite 3 times Surah al-Qadr and 12 times Surah al-ʾIkhlās.

After giving salām recite 70 times:

Oh Allāh send blessings on Muḥammad, the Unlettered Prophet,  
and on his descendants.

اللهم صل على محمد النبي الامي ش على آله

*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā muḥammadin-nabiyyi-l-ummi wa ʿalā ʾālih.*

Then make *sajdah* and recite 70 times in *sajdah*:

Holy and most Holy is the Lord of the Angels and the Holy Spirit.

*subbūḥun quddūs rabbu-l-malāʾikati wa-r-rūḥ*

سبح قدوس رب الملائكة والروح

Then sit erect in *jalsa* and say 70 times:

O Lord! Forgive [me], have mercy  
and be understanding about that which You know well.  
Truly You are Sublime, Mighty.

رب اغفر وارحم و تجاوز عما تعلم منك انت العلي الاعظم

*rabbi ʾighfir w-arḥam wa tajāwaz ʿamma taʿlamu  
ʾinnaka aʾnta-l ʿaliyyul ʿadḥīm.*

Then make *sajdah* again and recite 70 times:

Holy and most Holy is the Lord of the Angels and the Holy Spirit.

*subbūḥun quddūs rabbu-l-malāʾikatī wa-r-rūḥ*

سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ

We also find that the Messenger ﷺ said in the literature on Rajab that the reward for praying the 12 rakah on first night:

“By Him in whose Hand is my soul (*wa ʾlladhi nafsi bi-yadih*), I assure you that no servant [of His], whether manservant [*ʿabd*] or maidservant [*ama*], will ever perform this particular *ṣalat* without Allāh ﷻ forgiving all the sins of which that individual has ever been guilty, even if they are like the flecks of foam upon the ocean, as numerous as all the grains of sand, as heavy as the mountains, and as many as the drops of rain and the leaves on all the trees. On the Day of Resurrection (*Yawm al-Qiyama*), he will be allowed to intercede on behalf of seven hundred members of his family.”

“On the first night that worshipful servant spends in his grave, the reward for this *ṣalat* will come to visit him [in the shape of a human being], with a cheerful face and an eloquent tongue. ‘O my dear friend,’ it will say, “rejoice in the good tidings, for I am here to tell you that you have been delivered from every severe affliction!” This will prompt the servant to exclaim: ‘Who are you? By Allāh, I swear that I have never seen a man with a better-looking face than yours. Never have I heard a form of speech more charming than your way of speaking, and never have I smelled a fragrance more delightful than that of your perfume.’ It will then say: ‘O my dear friend, I am the reward for that *ṣalat*, the one you performed on whichever night it was, in whichever month it was, in whichever year it was. I have come here tonight in order to fulfill your request, to entertain you in your solitary state, and to banish your loneliness from you. Later on, when the trumpet is sounded, I shall provide you with shade to protect your head from the scorching heat on the Fields of the Resurrection (*arasat al-qiyama*). So rejoice in the good tidings, for you will never be deprived of the blessing that comes from your Master (*mawla*).’”

In the text *al-Ghunya li-Talibi Tariq al-Ḥaqq* by the Ghawth, al-ʿAdḥim, Syed Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani ؒ we find a list of traditional prayers of supplication (*adʿiya maʿthura*) that are particularly appropriate on the first night of Rajab. The Shaykh ؒ writes, “When the worshipper has duly performed his salat on the first night of Rajab, he is recommended to offer the following *Duʿāʾ*”:

“Oh Allāh ﷻ, to You the applicants apply this night, to You the aspirants aspire, and for Your gracious bounty and beneficence the seekers look in hope. You have special favors (*naḥaḥat*) to bestow this night, and prizes and gifts and presents. You will bestow them upon whomever You choose from among Your servants, and You will withhold them from those who are not ready to receive Your providential care (*ʿinayah*). Well, here am I, Your servant who is sorely in need of You, hoping for Your gracious bounty and beneficence! If it pleases You, O my Master, to bestow Your Grace this night upon one of Your creatures, and if You will be so generous as to grant him a favor out of Your kindness, then bless Sayyidina Muhammad and his family, and let me enjoy Your Superabundance and Beneficence, Yā Rabbu-l-ʿAlamīn!”

Hazrat Bābu-l-ʿIlm, ʿAlī bin Abū Ṭālib ؒ would devote himself entirely to worship during four nights of the year: The first night of Rajab; the Night of the Fastbreaking (*Laylatu-l-Fiṭr*); the Night of the Sacrifices (*Laylatu-l-Adha*); and the night of the of *Nisfu-shḤaʿbān*. This is the *Duʿāʾ* he used to offer on those nights:

“Oh Allāh ﷻ, bless Sayyidinā Muḥammad and his family, those Lanterns of Wisdom (*masabihu-l-ḥikma*), Masters of Grace (*mawali niʿamah*) and Mines of Virtue (*maʿadin al-ʾisma*)! Let them be my protection against all evil. Do not take me by surprise or unawares. Do not cause the outcome of my life's work to be nothing but disappointment and regret. May it please You to view me with favor, for Your forgiveness is granted to the wrongdoers and I am one of the wrongdoers. Oh Allāh ﷻ, forgive me that which cannot do You any harm, and grant me that which cannot bring You any benefit. You are the One whose Raḥmah is all-embracing, the One whose Ḥikmah is incomparable.

“Grant me the blessings of comfort and composure, security and good health, thankfulness, well-being, and *taqwa*. Instill patience and honesty in me and in your ʾawliyā ﷺ. Let ease (*yusr*) be Your gift to me, and do not let it come with difficulty (*ʿusr*) attached. Extend these same blessings to my wife and children, to my brothers in You ﷻ, and to all those Muslim men and Muslim women, those believing men and believing women, who have helped me to become the man I am today.”

To be truthful we must say that although many people observe this *ʿibadāh* on the night of the first Friday of the month of Rajab or its first night, both known as the “Night of Wishes” (*laylat al-raghāʾib*) during which the *ṣalāt al-raghāʾib* is performed, its observance was disapproved of by ʾImām Nawawi in his *Sharḥ al-muhadḍḥab* and in a *fatwa* he said it is based on invalid (*baṭil*) evidence. This is also the position of al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām. However, the Ḥafīḍh ʾIbn al-Ṣalah disagreed with al-ʿIzz and considered the performance of *ṣalāt al-raghāʾib* praiseworthy. So there are differences of opinion regarding this form of worship.

The Ghawth, Shāykh Syed Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani ﷺ also said concerning the special blessings bestowed by Allāh ﷻ upon those who perform the following *ṣalāt* during the holy month of Rajab.

“It was just after the new moon had appeared to mark the beginning of Rajab, as Shāykh al-ʾImām Ḥibatullāh ibn al-Mubarak aṣ-Ṣaqatī ﷺ has informed us on good authority, that the Prophet ﷺ turned to Salmān al-Farsī ﷺ and said: “Oh Salmān, Allāh ﷻ will surely erase all the sins from the record of any believing man and believing woman, who performs thirty *rakʿah* in the course of this month, reciting Surah al-Fātiḥah and the Surah that begins with “*Qul Yāā-ʾayyuha-l-kāfirūn*” three times in the first cycle and with “*Qul Huwa-Llāhu ʾAḥad*” three times in the second cycle. That man or believing woman will be granted the same reward as a person who has fasted throughout the entire month. He or she will be treated as one of those who continue to perform the *ṣalāt* right through to the following year, and will be credited every day with a deed as noble as that of one of the Martyrs of the Battle of Badr.



“For every day of fasting [in Rajab], the *ʿibadah* of an entire year will be recorded in favor of the believer concerned, whose credit will be enhanced by a thousand degrees. If the believer keeps the fast throughout the whole of this month, as well as performing this particular *ṣalāt* [i.e., the aforementioned thirty rakʿahs of prayer], Allāh ﷻ will deliver that man or woman from the Fire of Hell and declare that he or she is entitled to enter the Garden of Paradise, therein to dwell in the vicinity of Allāh ﷻ.

“Sayyidinā Jibrīl ؑ informed me of this, and then he went on to say: “Oh Muḥammad, this a clear sign to mark the distinction between you true believers, on the one hand, and the *mushrikīn* and *munaḥiqīn* on the other, as the *munaḥiqīn* do not perform that *ṣalāt*.”

Having heard these words addressed to him by the Prophet ﷺ Salmān ؓ responded by saying: “O Messenger, tell me exactly how and when I must perform that particular *ṣalāt*.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “O Salmān on the first day of the month you must perform ten rakʿah. In each *rakʿah* you must recite Surah al-Fāṭiḥa one time Surah al-Fāṭiḥah and the Surah that begins with “*Qul Yāā-ʿayyuha-l-kāfirūn*” three times in the first cycle and with “*Qul Huwa-Llāhu ʿAḥad*” three times in the second cycle. When you have pronounced the final salutation (*taslīm*), you must raise your hands and say:

“There is no deity except Allāh ﷻ, Alone. No partner has He. To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him belongs the praise. He brings to life and causes death, while He is Ever-Living and never dies. All goodness is in His Hand, and He is Powerful over all things. Oh Allāh ﷻ, no one can withhold what You have given, and no one can give what You have withheld, nor will the worldly fortune of the possessor of such fortune profit him, if he does not obtain the fortune that comes from You [in the hereafter].

“Then you must rub your face with your hands, for at this point you will have completed the first set of ten *rakʿah*.

“In the middle of the month you must perform another ten *rakʿah* of the *ṣalāt*. In each *rakʿah* you must again recite Surah al-Fāṭiḥah and

the Surah that begins with “*Qul Yāā-ʾayyuha-l-kāfirūn*” three times in the first cycle and with “*Qul Huwa-Llāhu ʾAḥad*” three times in the second cycle. When you have pronounced the final salutation (*taslīm*), you must raise your hands as you did before, but this time you must say:

“There is no deity except Allah ﷻ, Alone. No partner has He. To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him belongs the praise. He brings to life and causes death, while He is Ever-Living and never dies. All goodness is in His Hand, and He is Powerful over all things. (I worship Him) as Allāh ﷻ, Single, One, Everlasting, Alone, Unique. He takes unto Himself neither female consort nor son.

“Then you must rub your face with your hands, for at this point you will have completed the second set of ten *rakʿah*.

“At the end of the month you must perform the third and final set of ten *rakʿah* of ṣalāt, and in each *rakʿah* you must again recite Surah al-Fatihah and the Surah that begins with “*Qul Huwa-Llāhu ʾAḥad*” three times in the first cycle and with “*Qul Yāā-ʾayyuha-l-kāfirūn*” three times in the second cycle. When you have pronounced the final salutation (*taslīm*), you must raise your hands as you did before. When you have pronounced the final salutation (*taslīm*), you must raise your hands as before, but this time you must say:

“There is no deity except Allāh ﷻ, Alone. No partner has He. To Him belongs the kingdom and to Him belongs the praise. He brings to life and causes death, while He is Ever-Living and never dies. All goodness is in His Hand, and He is Powerful over all things. May Allāh ﷻ bless Sayyidinā Muḥammad and the pure members of his family. There is neither any power nor any strength except with Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.

“You should then ask for whatever you need, whereupon He will surely give a positive response to your duʿāʾ. Allāh ﷻ will put seventy ditches between you and the Fire, and each of those ditches will be as wide as the distance that separates this earth from heaven above. For every *rakʿah* of salat-prayer you have performed, He will credit you with a million *rakʿah*.

“He will also inscribe on your record an exemption from the Fire and a permit to cross the Narrow Bridge (sirāt).”

Hazrat Salman ؓ is reported as having said: “As soon as the Nabi ﷺ had finished speaking, I sank to the ground in humble prostration, weeping as I sought to express my gratitude to Allāh ﷻ for what I had just been privileged to hear.”

ʾImām al-Ghazālī ؒ in his *Book of the ʾIhya* in the section on the *Mysteries of Worship in ʾIslām* has this to say on worship in Rajab.

“The Worship of Rajab, it has been related ʾisnadan, with a ‘traced’ chain of witnesses, that the Messenger ﷺ said, “There is no one who fasts the first Thursday in Rajab and then performs a Worship between the first Evening Worship and the nightfall, of twelve rakʿahs, separating every two rakʿahs with a Salutation, reciting in each rakʿah the Fātiḥah al-Kitāb once, and, ‘Truly, We sent it down on the Night of Decree’ (Sūratu-l-Qadr 97)) three times, and, ‘Say, He is Allah, One’ (Sūratu-l-ʾIkhlāṣ) twelve times, and then, when he finishes his Worship, asks the Blessing for me seventy times, saying, ‘O Allāh, bless Muhammad, the unlettered Prophet, and his family!’ and then performs a Prostration, and, while in prostration say, ‘Holy and most Holy is the Lord of the Angels and the Holy Spirit’ and then raises his head and says, seventy times, ‘O Lord! Forgive, have mercy and be indulgent about that which You know well. Truly You are Sublime, Mighty.’ and then performs another Prostration and says in it what is similar to that which he said in the first Prostration, and then makes request for what he needs, in his Prostration, but will have it performed.”

“Muḥammad ﷺ said, “There is no one who performs this Worship without having Allāh ﷻ forgive all his sins, even though they are like the froth of the sea, and the number of the sand, and the weight of the mountains, and the leaves of the trees, and there shall be intercession on behalf of seven hundred of his household of those who have deserved the Fire.”

“So, this Worship is liked, and we have set it forth in this section only because it has been repeated with the recurrence of the years,

although its degree does not approximate the degree of the Rest-giving Worship and the Worship of the Two Feasts, because a single line of authority (ʾaḥad) has handed this Worship down. But I saw the people of al-Quds, all of them, consistently perform it, and not allow it to be abandoned, so I desired to set it forth.”

From all that has preceded this we can see that there is a reported consistency concerning these various forms of *naḥḥil* or voluntary worship. If we take the well known principle in ʾIslamic law that “what is not prohibited is permitted” we can safely say that there is no wrong in performing anyone of these worships because the ḥadīth quoted are not forged but have merely weak links. As long as we do not insist beyond any doubt that these are proven to be the direct sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ it doesn’t matter if you pray ten, twenty, fifty or a hundred rakʿah and as for the archaic revivalists the loss is entirely theirs as we know worship is always beneficial.

Towards the end of Ḥizbu-l-Baḥr Ṣaykh ʿAlī Abu-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Ṣaḥḥḥulī ﷺ says,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

bismi-llāhi-ladhī lā yaḍurru maʿa-s-mihi ṣayʿun  
fi-l-ʾarḍi wa lā fi-s-samāʾi wa huwa-s-samiʿu-l-ʿalīm

By the Name of Allāh no harm shall come to anything  
on the earth or in the skies and He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.



Now we shall begin our exposition on the Night Journey of the Prophet ﷺ which occurred in the month of Rajab.

Before the Prophet ﷺ took this night journey, the ceiling of the house in which he was staying was opened, and Jibrīl ﷺ descended and cut open the chest of Prophet ﷺ and washed it with Zamzam. Then he emptied something from a container into the chest of the Prophet ﷺ to increase his wisdom as well as the strength of his belief. This was done to prepare him for that which he had yet to see in the upper worlds from among the wonders of the creation.

The miracle of al-ʾIsrāʾ is confirmed in the Qurʾān (17:1) which we quoted in Arabic at the very beginning of this article.

The meaning in English of the Words of Allāh ﷻ are:

Glorified be He Who carried His worshipper by night  
from the Place of Inviolable Prostration (*maṣjidi-l-ḥarām*)  
to the Place of Furthest Prostration (*maṣjidi-lʾ-aqāṣā*)  
the neighborhood of which We have blessed  
that We might show him some of Our Signs  
Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing  
(Sūratu-l-ʾIsrāʾ 17:1)

This journey is also confirmed in the Ṣaḥīḥ Hadīth. As such, there is scholarly consensus (*ijmaʿ*) that the Prophet ﷺ journeyed in body and soul the night of al-ʾIsrāʾ from Maṣjid al-Ḥaram in Makkah to Maṣjid al-Aqsa in al-Quds (Jerusalem). Moreover, these scholars indicated the person who denies al-ʾIsrāʾ is a blasphemer for belying the explicit text of the Qur'an.

After the Prophet ﷺ performed the Evening Prayer (al-ʾIṣḥāʾ), Jibrīl ﷺ came to him with a white animal, slightly larger than a donkey yet smaller than a mule. This animal was the Burāq, (البُرَاق al-Burāq or 'lightning') who is one of the animals of Paradise. Jibrīl ﷺ held Burāq by his ear and told the Prophet ﷺ to mount it and ride.



al-Burāq is an extremely swift animal the length of whose stride is the farthest distance that its eye can see. Whenever he faces a mountain his hind legs extend, and whenever he goes downhill his front legs extend. He has two wings on his thighs which lent further strength to his legs.

He bucked when the Prophet ﷺ came to mount him. Jibrīl ﷺ put his hand on his mane and said: “Are you not ashamed, Oh Burāq? By Allāh, no-one has ridden you in all creation more dear to Allāh ﷻ than he is.” Hearing this he was so ashamed that he sweated until he became soaked, and al-Burāq stood still so that the Prophet ﷺ could mount him and they began their journey.

In a twinkling the Prophet ﷺ and Jibrīl ﷺ arrived in a land filled with many palm trees. Jibrīl ﷺ told the Prophet ﷺ to dismount and pray, so the Prophet ﷺ dismounted from al-Burāq and in this place he prayed two rakʿas.

When ﷺ he had completed his ṣalāt, Jibrīl ﷺ asked him, “Do you know where you prayed?” and the Prophet ﷺ answered, “Allāh ﷻ knows best.” Jibrīl ﷺ told him, “This is Yathrib; this is Taybah.” which are two names for the city now known as al-Madinah.

al-Burāq continued with the Prophet ﷺ and Jibrīl ﷺ until they reached another place which was a mountain in a land of deserts. Again Jibrīl ﷺ told the Prophet ﷺ to get down and pray. The Prophet ﷺ dismounted there and again prayed two rakʿah. Jibrīl ﷺ informed the Prophet ﷺ that was Ṭūr Sināʾ (الطور). where the Prophet Musā ﷺ had received Revelation from Allāh ﷻ.

When he had completed his prayers on the Mountain of Sinai, al-Burāq took off again with the Prophet ﷺ and Jibrīl ﷺ and once again they stopped, this time at Bīr Sabʿa (The Seven Wells) near to al-Khalīl in Filisṭīn) where Prophet ʾIbārihim and ʾIshaq ﷺ had lived and again the Prophet ﷺ dismounted and prayed two rakʿah.

Completing his prayers he once more mounted al-Burāq and after a brief time again Jibrīl ﷺ told the Prophet ﷺ to dismount and again he prayed two rakʿah. This was in Bayt Laḥm, where Prophet ʾIsa ﷺ (Jesus) was born.

Then al-Burāq continued with the Messenger ﷺ and after facing some obstacles including ad-Dajjal (المسيح الدجال) they finally entered the city of al-Quds. There the Prophet ﷺ went to the Place of al-Aqsa. On the walls of al-Aqsa was a ring used by the Messengers ﷺ to tie their animals and here the Prophet ﷺ tied al-Burāq.

Then the Prophet ﷺ entered the wide courtyard of al-ʾAqṣā where Allāh ﷻ had assembled for him ﷺ all the prophets — from Adam to ʿIsa ﷺ and it was in this vast courtyard that the Prophet ﷺ stepped forward and led all the Prophets ﷺ in prayer.

It is worth mentioning that on the journey of the Prophet ﷺ from Masjid al-Ḥaram to Masjid al-ʾAqṣā that Allāh ﷻ enabled the Prophet ﷺ to see some of His wondrous creations and showed him the world (*dunya*) in the form of an old woman wearing a great deal of jewelry as well as many other things like people whose lips and tongues were clipped with scissors made of fire. Jibrīl ﷺ told the Prophet ﷺ, “These are the speakers of sedition (*fitna*) who call people to misguidance.” More of the many wonderous and often horrifying things he saw that can be found in the many accounts of his travelling across the land on al-Burāq.

I should also make note that al-Burāq was said to have carried ʾIbrahim ﷺ when he visited his wife Hajar and son Ismaʿil ﷺ. According to tradition, ʾIbrahim ﷺ lived with Sarah at Bir Sabaʿ and al-Burāq would carry him to Makkah to see his family there, and take him back to Bir Sabaʿ. I have not been able to substantiate these reports but mention this only in passing.

Another item of interest is the following ḥadīth taken from Book 1, Number 317 of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukḥārī:

“Abu al-ʿAliya reported: ʾIbn Abbās, the son of the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ, told us that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had observed: “On the night of my night journey I passed by Mūsā b. ʿImran ﷺ, a man light brown in complexion, tall, well-built as if he was one of the men of the Ṣhanuʿa, and saw ʾIsa ﷺ son of Maryam as a medium-statured man with white and red complexion and crisp hair, and I was shown Malik the guardian of Fire, and ad-Dajjal amongst the signs which were shown to me by Allāh ﷻ.

There are also stories of how ad-Dajjal tried to bar the way of the Prophet ﷺ when he was on his way to al-ʾAqṣā and in relation to this Mujaḥḥid Ibn al-Harīth ﷺ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Ibn Maryam ﷺ will kill al-Dajjal at the door of Ludd (a town in Filistīn) directly to the west al-Quds”. (Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhī)

In any case after the Prophet ﷺ took his Night Journey (*al-ʾIsrāʾ*) from Masjid al-Ḥaram to Masjid al-ʾAqṣā and led all the Prophets ﷺ in prayer, he began his ascent to the upper heavens.

The Prophet ﷺ ascended into the heavens from the rock under the familiar golden dome that has become the symbol for al-Quds (Jerusalem). on a set of moving stairs, called *al-mirqāt*, in which one step is made of gold and the next of silver. *al-Mirqāt* is also called the angels' stairway, which they use to descend from the *Jannah* down to the earth and to ascend up to the heavens again.

This is a journey that no other human had ever made or has made since. It demonstrates ability of Allāh ﷻ to bring the seemingly impossible into being. Here, the concepts of time and space as we know them do not apply, as it is beyond our human capabilities to understand the true omnipotence of Allāh ﷻ. In his sayings and traditions, the Prophet ﷺ described the size of the heavens; the first heaven, as compared to the second, is similar to a small ring in the desert, and he continued this narrative until he described the sixth heaven as being the size of a ring in the desert compared to the seventh heaven. The magnitude of this is unimaginable. Our earth, and what we call the universe, is contained within the first heaven. Even with the knowledge of our time, we have no idea how big this is, how far the universe extends, or what wonders it contains.

When the Prophet ﷺ and Jibrīl ﷺ arrived at the first heaven, Jibrīl ﷺ requested the gate to be opened. The angel assigned to that gate asked Jibrīl ﷺ, “Who is with you?” Jibrīl answered, “Muḥammad.” The angel asked Jibrīl ﷺ, “Was he sent? Is it time for him to ascend to the heavens?” Jibrīl ﷺ said, “Yes.” So, the gate was opened for him, and the Prophet ﷺ entered the first heaven.

There the Prophet ﷺ saw Adam ﷺ. To the right of Adam ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ saw some bodies, and to the left of Adam ﷺ, other bodies. If Adam ﷺ looked to his right he would laugh, and if he would look to his left he would cry. Adam ﷺ was in fact seeing the souls of his descendants. Those on his right were his descendants who would die as believers and those on his left were his descendants who would die as non-believers.



He greeted him with the greeting of all Muslims, — *as-salāmu ʿalaykum* — Adam ﷺ returned the greeting and expressed his faith in the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ. He called him his pure son, the pure prophet. We can only begin to imagine the pleasure that this meeting must have given to both men. After thousands of years, Adam ﷺ was able to see his descendent Muḥammad ﷺ, the greatest of his descendants. and the Prophet ﷺ was able to look into the eyes of the father ﷺ of mankind.

Then the Prophet ﷺ ascended to the second heaven. In this second heaven was where he saw the Prophets ʿIsa and Yaḥya ﷺ who are cousins as their mothers were sisters. They welcomed the Prophet ﷺ and made supplication (*duʿāʾ*) for him for all good things.

The Prophet ﷺ then ascended to the third heaven, where he found Prophet Yūsuf ﷺ who, as we know, was extremely handsome. The Prophet ﷺ described him as an embodiment of half of all beauty in the world. Yūsuf ﷺ received him with a warm welcome and made supplication (*duʿāʾ*) for him for good things.

In the fourth heaven, the Prophet ﷺ met ʾIdrīs ﷺ, whom Allāh ﷻ described in Qurʾān (19:57) as being elevated to a very high level.

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ ؑ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا • وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا

wa-dhkur fi-l-kitābi-ʾidris; ʾinnahu kāna ṣiddiqaṇ-nabiyyā  
wa faʿanahu makānan ʿalīm

And remember in the Book, ʾIdrīs, surely he was a truthful one.

A Prophet [and] We raised him to a high station.

(Maryam 19.57)

In the fifth heaven, the Prophet ﷺ met Hārūn ﷺ, the older brother of Mūsā ﷺ. At each meeting, the Prophet's ﷺ expressed their faith in the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ.

In the sixth heaven, the Prophet ﷺ met Musā ﷺ. After they had exchanged greetings and Musā ﷺ had, as had all the Prophets ﷺ in the previous heavens, expressed his faith in the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ, Musā ﷺ began to weep. When the Prophet ﷺ asked why, Musā ﷺ replied: “A young man has come after me, and more of his followers will enter paradise than my followers”.

Before the advent of Prophet ﷺ, all the Prophets ﷺ delivered their message of submission to the One to their own people; Muḥammad ﷺ, however, had come for all of mankind. Allāh ﷻ refers to him as a mercy and says in the Qurʾān:

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أَذْنٌ  
 قُلْ أَذْنٌ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
 وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ

wa minhumu-l-ladhīna yuʾdhūna-n-nabiyy wa yaqūlūna huwa ʾūdḥūn  
 qul ʾudḥunu khayrin lakum yuʾminu bi-llāhi wa yuʾminu lilmuʾminīn  
 wa raḥmatul-l-ladhīna ʾāmanū minkum.

And there are those who malign the Prophet saying,  
 “He is [only] an ear.

Say, “[He is] the ear of goodness for [all] you who believe in Allāh  
 and those who believe in the believers,  
 and [he is] a Mercy to [all] those among you who believe.”

(at-Tawbah 9:62)

His message is beyond all tribal and cultural boundaries and his message is for all the worlds not one single community. The Prophets of Allāh ﷻ stood behind him and supported him in accord with his saying that all of the Prophets ﷺ are brothers. Thus when they all prayed behind him at al-ʾAqṣā there was finally the congregation (*jamaʿ*) of a true, real and lasting brotherhood.

Allāh ﷻ rewarded His Messenger ﷺ and caused him to understand that the Prophets ﷺ before him also went through difficult times preaching to their people. They all stood behind the Prophet ﷺ and acknowledged him as their leader. This was another indication of his importance and excellence as well as the nature of his message.

The Prophet ﷺ and Jibrīl ﷺ then ascended to the seventh heaven to meet with our great grandfather, the Prophet ʾIbrāhīm ؑ who he found seated with his back against al-Baytu-l-Maʿmur. To the dwellers in Jannah, al-Baytu-l-Maʿmur or The Much-Frequented Shrine is like the Kaʿbah is to the inhabitants of the Earth.

al-Bayti-l-Maʿmūr (الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ) also called The Enduring House of Worship is in fact directly above the Kaʿbah and every day 70,000 angels enter it, then exit from it, and never return. The next day another 70,000 angels go, come out, and never return. This will continue until the Day of Judgment. In this, there is an indication of the greatness of the numbers of the angels — their numbers are far more than the numbers of the humans and the jinn all together.

The Prophet ʾIbrahim ؑ, as we said, was leaning against al-Bayti-l-Maʿmūr because he and his son, Ismaʿil ؑ, rebuilt the Kaʿbah. The rule is that one reaps the fruits of his or her labors. He is leaning on it because he labored on re-building it in his life, and now he can rest in the hereafter.

The Prophet ﷺ in speaking about his visit there said, “After this, I came upon a person all drowned in Light. He was seated upon a throne in an attitude of awesome dignity, and before him was a multitude of little children. I asked Jibrīl ؑ who was this person of such light, majesty and awe, and who were all the children with him. The angel answered me, ‘This is your great grandfather ʾIbrahim ؑ. He loves you and the entire nation that believes in you.

“He once prayed to the Lord of the Worlds that he might be of service to your nation, and the Lord heard his supplication. He gave him all these little children who are the little boys and girls from your nation who die before reaching adulthood. Allāh ﷻ has entrusted ʾIbrahim ؑ with their upbringing and education. Until the Day of Judgment, he will be instructing them in proper behavior and training their minds in the useful sciences.

“After having perfected their schooling, on the Day of Gathering he will lead them forth and bring them to the site of Resurrection. There, before the Lord’s Holy Presence, he will entreat Him with these words: ‘Oh my Lord, here are the youngsters of the nation of Your Beloved Muhammad ﷺ who died before reaching the age of maturity. According to Your order and command, I have taught and trained them in all useful (*maslahah*) branches of knowledge, and brought them before Your Majestic Throne. Yours is all kindness, favor and grace.’

“At this invocation, the Almighty Lord will reply with the full glory of His Majesty, ‘Oh children, go and enter the Gardens of Paradise.’

Thereupon, these children will reply, ‘Oh our Lord, by Your Grace and Your Munificence, let our parents go with us!’

Allāh ﷻ will again direct His Divine Speech at them, and say,

‘You have nothing to answer for, go and enter into Paradise forthwith; as for your parents, they are accountable to Me and there are things they have to answer for.’

Again, these children entreat the Lord, ‘During their lives in the material world, we have caused them sorrow through our absence; now, by the vastness of Your Mercy which floods the universal expanse, let us be the cause of happiness for them.’

Upon this plea, the All-Merciful and Beneficent Lord accepts the duʿa and addresses them, saying, ‘Go then and take from the spring of Kawthar and give your parents to drink from it as well.’

After this, Jibrīl ﷺ turned to me and said, ‘Give Salām to ʾIbrāhīm ﷺ.’ I stepped forth and greeted him, whereupon he honored me and received me well. Then he spoke to me, saying, ‘Welcome to you, oh virtuous son and righteous Prophet! Tonight you are to be honored and you will witness the splendor of the Lord of the Universe, and you will be admitted to behold all manner of sacred displays. As for your nation, it is the last of all nations and it will be a very weak nation, so do not neglect to intercede with your Lord on their behalf.’

“He ﷺ continued, ‘Oh Muḥammad ﷺ! Give Salām to your ʾummah from me and convey to them my advice: the world (*dunya*) is of a passing nature and swift in its decline.

“In the eyes of the Everlasting it is but base and contemptible matter. He attributes to it not even the value of a fly’s wing. Tell them not to waste their lives in the pursuit of its vain beauties, its pomp and palaces; not to be deceived by its many and varied tastes, by promises of grandeur and large followings. For it is the world to come, which is lasting, and eternal.

“Therefore, tell them to busy themselves in following the pure ways of the *Shariʿa* (Divine Law) by night and by day, and the guidance contained in your Sunnah so that they might thereby gain the good pleasure of the Allāh ﷻ. The Gardens of Paradise are vast, so let them plant there many, many trees.’

“I asked him ﷺ then, ‘How does one plant a tree in the Jannah?’”

‘He replied, ‘Through the recital of this Tasbiḥ:

Subḥanallāhi wa-l-ḥamdu-li-llāhi  
wa lāā ʾilaha illa-llāhu wa allāhu ʾakbar  
wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa bi-llāhi-l-ʿaliyyi-l-ʿaḍḥīm.

Glory be and Praise to Allah;  
None is worthy of worship but Allah alone,  
and Allah is Most Great!  
There is no Might and no Power save with Allah,  
the Exalted, Majestic

Tell them to recite this *duʿāʾ*, for each time they recite it, a tree is planted in the Jannah.’

“Then we directly approached al-Bayti-l-Maʿmūr which seventy thousand angels visit each day. “In front of it there is a sea of light in which they first bathe, then take thereof a veil of light each and wrap it around themselves. This is their *ʾiḥḥram*. Then they begin to make *tawaf* calling out *labbayk Allāhumma labbayk* (‘At Your service! oh Allāh, at Your service!’), as the pilgrims do on earth. Having once completed their *tawaf* (circumambulation), these angels do not return again until the Day of Judgment, and it is only the angels of the seventh Heaven who go there at all. Jibrīl ﷺ then took me by the hand and we went inside.

Upon emerging from al-Bayti-l-Maʿmūr the Prophet ﷺ continued and said, “We ascended to Sidratti-l-Munttaha (سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى).” Concerning the ‘Sidratti-l-Munttaha’, the learned ‘Ulama have given various differing opinions, particularly with regard to the statement: “It is called ‘Sidratti-l-Munttaha’ (the cedar tree of the extreme limit) because it is the end of all that is knowable, and nobody can know what is beyond it.”

Some others have explained: “Whoever comes from above, arrives here and cannot pass on further down. Whoever comes from below, reaches this point and cannot ascend further. Therefore it is called by this name.” Yet others try to explain it in this way: “The world of spirits ends at this point, therefore it is called the Cedar Tree of the extreme limit.” Ibn ʿAbbās tells us: “It is a tree which is made all of gold. Some of its boughs are made of emerald, some are of ruby. The tree measures a distance of one hundred and fifty years journey from its foot to its top. The whole tree is engulfed by light.”

The Holy Prophet ﷺ continues: “Upon this tree I saw such a number of angels that only Allah ﷻ can know. They enfolded all the leaves of that tree and glittered like locusts, flashing like stars.”

This holy verse was revealed concerning this vision:

وَلَقَدْ رَأَىٰ نَزْلَةَ أُخْرَىٰ • عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ •  
عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ • إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى •  
مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى • لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى •

wa laqadā raʾahu nazlatan ʾukhrā • ʿinda sudrati-l-muntahā •  
ʿindahā jannatu-l-maʾwā • ʾidh yaghsha-s-sidrata ma yaghshā •  
ma zāga-l-baṣara wa mā ṭaghā •  
laqadā raʾaya min ʾayāti abbihi-l-kubārā •

And indeed he saw him another time.  
at the Cedar Tree of the Furthest Boundary.

Near to the Garden of Refuge.

Where there covered the Cedar Tree what covered it.

his neither wavered nor did it stray

Indeed he saw the greatest Signs of his Lord.

(al-Najm 53:13-18)

The commentators interpret this verse as meaning that the whole tree was surrounded and embraced by the multitude of angels upon it. It is related that there were as many angels upon the leaves of that tree as there are stars in the sky and grains of sand in the earth. Some angels took the form of golden butterflies.

All of them came to greet the Prophet ﷺ and when they beheld his saintly beauty, they all gave thanks to the Lord and gave to him the assurance of the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ.

Jibrīl ؑ, too, had his place upon the branches of this tree, and his was a branch made of green emerald. Upon that branch there is a carpet spread of light, and on it there is a *miḥrab* made of red ruby (*yaqūt*). This *miḥrab* is the place of the Angel Jibrīl ؑ. Before it was placed a seat of honor reserved for the Prophet ﷺ upon which no one had sat since the day it was first set in place.

This seat was surrounded by forty thousand seats upon which angels sat reciting the ʾInjīl. To the left there were also ten thousand seats made of beryl, and the angels seated upon them were writing out the Zabūr (Psalms). Forty thousand other angels reciting the Zabūr surrounded each seat.

Behind us there were ten thousand more seats of red ruby. The angels seated on these were writing out the Qurʾān, and around each seats there were seated another forty thousand angels reciting the Qurʾān

This has been explained as follows. The wisdom of the Torah being placed before the Prophet ﷺ, the Injil to his right, and the Zabur to his left is this:

Before the Prophet ﷺ Revelation (Torah, Zabūr ʾInjīl) appeared in the world and begun fulfilling his mission. The Books had already been revealed containing descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ to come and telling of his characteristics and excellence, and of the preeminent position of his nation among all other, previous nations.

The Qurʾān was placed behind him because its Judgment (*ḥukm*) will remain valid and unsurpassed until the Day of Judgment, and even the Day of Judgment itself will be conducted by its rulings. It is a sign of its remaining free and safe from abrogation, substitution, alteration or corruption.

The Prophet ﷺ continues: “Below this tree there flowed four streams, two of which were evident and two of which were hidden.

“Jibrīl ؑ told me, ‘The two hidden streams flow into the Gardens of Paradise, while the two visible ones flow down to the Earth. One of them is the Euphrates, the other is the Nile.’

“Then I beheld another stream, by the banks of which tents had been set up that were of ruby, pearls and chrysolite. By their banks flew birds of emerald green whose necks resembled the necks of camels. Jibrīl ؑ then said to me, ‘What you see here is the spring of Kawthar. Allah ﷻ has made you a gift of it.’

As Allāh ﷻ says in al-Qurʾān,

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ • فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ  
إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ •

innāa ʾaʿṭaynaka-l-kowthar • fa-ṣalli li-rabbika wa ʾanḥar •  
inna shāniʾaka huwa-ʾabātar •

Truly We have bestowed abundance upon you.

So offer prayer to your Lord and sacrifice.

Truly the one one who hates you is completely cut off

(al-Kowthar 108:1-3)

“This stream flowed along over pebbles of rubies and emerald and its waters were whiter than milk. I took up a cup and drank from it. Its taste was sweeter than honey, and its scent more pleasing than musk. A spring gushed forth beneath that tree. Jibrīl ؑ told me its name: Salsabīlā (سَلْسَبِيلًا). It is the source of two waters, one is called Kowthar (Abundance) and the other is Raḥmah (Mercy). Both streams flow out from the gates of the Garden.

“Those entering into the Garden drink from the waters of Kowthar, and all the calamities of the heart, base character and bad habits disappear and they become cleansed. Then they bathe in the spring of Raḥmah (Mercy). The spring of Salsabīlā is the source of these waters. After bathing in this spring they enter into Paradise and never again will they age and become old.

“Then I saw groups of angels passing in rows before the Sidratti-l-Munttaha, and their rows were joined together in a straight line streaming far into the distance until they were out of sight.



They formed such a long formation, that were a bird of swiftest flight to fly along it for a hundred years, he would not reach its other end. They moved faster than the wind, as swiftly as the arrow flies. I then asked Jibrīl ﷺ, ‘Where does this multitude of angels come from and where are they going? And when did they begin their passage?’ Jibrīl ﷺ explained, saying, ‘They have been passing by since the time they were created, ceaselessly in passage. I know not from where they come nor where they are going.’ I marveled at their great number, remarking on it under my breath. In an instant this verse was revealed to me through Jibrīl ﷺ:

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ

wa mā yaʿlamu junuda rabbika ʾilla hū

no one knows the forces of your Lord but He

(al-Muddaththir 74:31)

“Then they brought before me three bowls; one containing wine, one containing honey and a third containing milk. I chose the one with milk and drank from it. Jibrīl ﷺ then said to me, ‘You have chosen the natural disposition of ʾIslām and your nation will be firmly established in the religion of ʾIslām. Had you chosen the cup of wine, your nation would have been a rebellious and fickle one.’

“I saw an angel at the Sidratti-l-Munttaha greater than all the other angels I had yet seen. He measured a thousand times a thousand years’ wayfaring. This angel had seventy thousand heads. Every head had seventy thousand faces. On every face there were seventy thousand mouths. And each head was covered with seventy thousand cloths. Each one of these coverings was embellished with one thousand times thousand pearls. Each of these pearls was so great that there appeared a sea in its midst in which fish were swimming. Upon their backs was written the Kalimat-ut-Tawhid, the Declaration of Unity:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

ʾashadu ʾan lā ʾillah wa ʾashadu ʾan na muḥammadu-rasulu-llāh

I bear witness there is no deity Allāh

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh

“This angel engaged in exaltation of the Lord, placing one hand upon his head and one hand behind his back. The beauty of his voice was such that it caused a commotion at the Divine Throne itself. I asked Jibrīl عليه السلام to tell me who that angel was and he said, ‘Allāh عز وجل created this angel two thousand years before He created Adam عليه السلام.’ I then asked where he had been all this time and where was his place of dwelling. Jibrīl عليه السلام replied, ‘In Paradise there is a place to the right of the Divine Throne, that is the abode of this angel. From there he was brought here.’

“I went up to him and greeted him and he rose in answer to my salāms. Then he spread his wings, and all the heavens and the Earth were covered by their expanse. He then kissed my face and said, ‘Good tidings to you, and to your nation!’

“The Almighty عز وجل has decreed that your nation might have a most singularly blessed month so that He might forgive them their sins. This holy month is the month of Ramaḍān and it is meant as a gift for you and your nation. For its sake your nation will find forgiveness. I have been sent here this very night to announce to you this great gladness.’ Then I saw two boxes standing before him. On each of them there was a key of light.

“I asked that angel what was inside of those boxes. He told me, ‘In one of these boxes there are the letters of release from the Fire for those among your nation who fast the whole month of Ramaḍān until the new moon, up till the Day of Judgment.’

According to a different narration, the angel is to have said, “Every day of Ramaḍān, at the time of ʾIftār (the breaking of the fast), the Almighty عز وجل frees from Hellfire six hundred thousand of His servants who have fasted, When *Jumuʿah* has come, He frees six hundred thousand prisoners every hour for twenty-four hours from the Fire until the Night of Power (ليلة القدر) has come.

“On that blessed night, that is to say, during the twenty-four hours making up that night and day, at the beginning of every hour the Lord frees from Hell as many of His servants as He has freed since the beginning of the holy month, including the days of *Jumuʿah*.

“The last day of Ramadan, at the time of ʾIftār the Lord sets free as many of His servants as He has freed during the whole month, including the *Jumuʿah* days and also the Night of Power (*laylatu-l-qadr*).”

The Prophet ﷺ continues:

“The angel told me that the other box contained this precious gift: ‘On the Day of Judgment, seventy thousand persons of your nation will be granted entry into Paradise without questioning or reckoning. Their certificates of release are contained in this box. In addition to these seventy thousand, each one of them will be granted the release of another seventy thousand from among his friends and relations and other disobedient Muslims. They, too, will be released without reckoning and granted accession to the heavenly gardens. This box contains the letters of release for all of them. Ṭūbā , glad tidings to you and your nation, oh Rasūlullaāh ﷺ!’”

By the term “Ṭūbā” he meant to say, “Oh Rasūlullaāh ﷺ, among all the countless and unbounded pleasures of the People of Paradise, the delights of the Ṭūbā tree are reserved for you and your nation.”

This expression is metaphorical; the part signifies the whole, and speaking about the Ṭūbā tree, signifies the totality of delights in the entire heavenly realm. In the sense mentioned above, Ṭūbā signifies a tree in Paradise. However, the word ‘ṭūbā’ is also (grammatically) the feminine form of the word ‘atyab’, (which means better, more excellent or as felicity). This can be interpreted as follows:

“I give tidings of gladness to you and your nation; those who pass their days in the world in a good way and spend their time in a commendable fashion, who perform good works all their lives, and when they reach the end of their days will return their trusts in the light of faith, uttering the words of unity; whose questioning in the grave by the angels Munkar and Nakir will be made easy and there graves will resemble a Garden of of the Gardens of Paradise in which they will be at ease and gaze out upon the Garden.

“On the Day of Gathering they will be gathered under the Banner of Praise (*liwah al-ḥamd*) and who will receive many blessings under

the shadow of the Great Throne. They are those who will be given their book of accounts into their right hand and whose reckoning will be light; who will cross the bridge of the *Sirat* along with those who are the first to cross it, and who will by the Grace of Allah be of those who enter Paradise freely, without questioning or Judgment; who will be granted the sweetest of all bliss in being privileged to gaze upon the Divine Beauty of the Lord and thus will have attained their ultimate desire – these are the tidings I give to you and your nation, oh Muḥammad ﷺ.”

The Mercy to all the Worlds ﷺ continued his narration:

“Here, too, I beheld the angel Jibrīl ؑ in his own true form. He had six hundred wings, which were made of various kinds of jewels and pearls. Whenever he would open up a pair of these wings. They filled the space between east and west. The wings were embellished by all sorts of precious stones. It would have taken a swift-flying bird five hundred, or according to other sources, seven hundred years to measure the distance from one shoulder to the other.

“Then we came to an open space from where we could hear the sounds of the writing of the Divine Pen. I said to Jibrīl ؑ, ‘Go ahead’, but Jibrīl ؑ answered, ‘You go ahead, for in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ you are more honored than I and all the world contains.’ I then passed on ahead of him and Jibrīl ؑ came on behind me. We came unto a veil of gold. Jibrīl ؑ shook the veil and a voice was heard from behind it, saying, ‘Who are you?’ Jibrīl ؑ answered, ‘I am Jibrīl ؑ, and Muhammad ﷺ is with me.’ From within the veil this angel intoned: ‘Allāhu ʾAkbar, Allāhu ʾAkbar.’ From behind the curtain came a voice which said, ‘My servant has spoken truly, I am indeed the Greatest, no Greatness is due to any but Me.’

“The angel called, ‘ashḥadu an lā ʾilaha illallāh.’ (أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ) Again there was a call, ‘My servant has spoken truly, ʾinnanī ʾana-llāhu lā ʾillahu ʾillā ʾanā (إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا) I am Allāh beside whom there is no Deity except me.’

The angel repeated the words of the Shahada, ‘Ashḥadu anna Muḥammadan Rasulullāh, I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is the

Prophet of Allah.’ (أشهد أن محمد رسول الله) Again there was a call, ‘My servant has spoken truly, I have sent Muhammad ﷺ as My Messenger and My Prophet.’ Then I heard the angel say, ‘Ḥayy ‘ala-s-salat (حي على الصلاة), Ḥayy ‘alal-falah (حي على الفلاح).’ Another call was heard, ‘My servant has spoken truly; he calls My servants to come to Me, worshipful. I have invited them to My gate, and whoever answers My invitation, will be saved and meet with success.’ Thereafter I heard the angel say, ‘Allāhu ʾAkbar, Allāhu ʾAkbar’ (الله أكبر الله أكبر) Another call came, ‘My servant has spoken the Truth: Ana Akbar, I am the Greatest.’ The angel then said, ‘La ilaha ill’Allah’ (لا إله إلا الله). A call came, saying, ‘My servant has spoken truly, there is no Deity but I.’ (لا إله إلا أنا)

“Then I heard another call, ‘Oh Muḥammad ﷺ Allāh ﷻ has honored you with perfect honor over all those who went before you and who are yet to come.’ I then asked Jibrīl ﷺ, ‘Who is this angel?’ Jibrīl ﷺ told me, ‘I swear by the Might and Glory of Allāh ﷻ who has sent you as His Messenger of Truth: I have never seen this angel, I do not know who he is or anything about him, but you are now about to find out.’ I then asked, ‘Are you not going any further then? Does a true friend leave his friend in midstream?’ Jibrīl ﷺ I then said, ‘Oh Rasūlullāh ﷺ, every angel has his place and station beyond which he cannot go. If I advance even the breadth of a finger, the Wrath of Allah will burn me. My ultimate station is the Sidratti-l-Munttaha. Up to this very moment, I have never gone as far as this point. For your sake and honor, however, I have been given permission, and I have brought you here. But I can proceed no further than this.’

“Then I asked, ‘Is there anything you request of the Lord Almighty? If there is anything you desire, I will ask it of Him.’ Jibrīl ﷺ answered, ‘My request of the Lord is that He permit me, when your nation is ordered to march across the Bridge of the Sirat, to spread my wing across that bridge and assist them in crossing it in safety’

“Then an angel stretched forth his hand from behind the veil, and in less time than the blinking of an eye, he pulled me through to the other side.

“Then he said to me, ‘Oh Rasūlullāh ﷺ, go ahead of me.’ In a short while, he had brought me before a curtain of pearls. When he stirred the curtain, an angel’s voice was heard from behind it, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The angel accompanying me said, ‘I am the angel of the golden curtain and with me is the most-honored Prophet of the Lord.’ The angel behind the veil then said, ‘Allahu Akbar’ (الله أكبر) and, stretching out his hand from behind the veil, and pulled me across. In as little time as it takes for the eye to blink, I had traversed the curtain and found myself standing before him, where he greeted me with every mark of honor and respect.

“In this way I passed through seventy thousand veils, each one of them made of a different kind of jewel. The distance between each of these curtains was one of five hundred years’ wayfaring, and the thickness of each was that of another five hundred years. When I had passed through all of the veils, I remained all alone. Then *Rafrāf* came to me and became visible in the shape of a green cushion, which greeted me with greetings of peace. He spoke to me, saying, ‘Seat yourself upon me, for I will be your transport.’”

During the night of his Miʿraj, the Prophet ﷺ journeyed upon five different conveyances: the first was the Burāq, which took him up to al-Quds. The second was the Miʿraj or the steps on which he ascended up into the earthly skies. The third was the wing of Jibrīl عليه السلام; on it he approached the far veil. The fourth were the angels who pulled him from one veil to the next. The fifth was the *Rafrāf*; with this he proceeded as far as Allāh ﷻ wished him to go.

مُتَكِينٍ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خَضِرٍ

muttkiʿīna ʿala rafrāfin khudrin

seated on green pillows

(ar-Raḥman 55:76)

The Prophet ﷺ continues his narrative: “I sat upon the *Rafrāf* and it took me as far as the Kursī (Divine Courtyard or The Foundation).

The Lord Almighty has created the Kursī from pearls, and it is very great, so great it is that it defies all description.”

In the Holy Quran, Allah says about the Kursī:

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ  
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ۝ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۝

wasiʿa kursiyyuhu-s-samāwāti wa-l-ʾarḍ;  
wa lā yaʾuduhu ḥifḍhumā — wa huwa-l-ʿaliyu-l-ʿaḍhīm

His Foundation (*kursī*) is more vast than the heavens and the earth  
– and He is not tired by their preservation –  
and He is the All High, the Sublime.  
(al-Baqarah 2:255)

The commentator, Ibn ʿAbbās, says about this in his commentary:

“If the seven layers of the earth and the seven layers of the heavens were put together and spread out, next to the Kursī they would be as a tiny ring which has been lost in a desert.” Between the Kursī (The Foundation / كُرْسِيُّه) and the ʿArsh (The Divine Authority / الْعَرْشِ) there are seventy veils. If not for these, the angels of the Kursī would be burnt from the Light of the Seat of Divine Authority.

[note: some translators translate *kursī* as “footstool” but it is our understanding that such a translation is both archaic and misleading as is the use of the word “throne” to translate ʿarsh. Both of these lend terms themselves to anthropomorphic thinking and ideation bringing to mind the old man with a long white beard sitting on his throne in popular renaissance graphic imagery. Allāh ﷻ is neither an old man nor does he has a long white beard nor is He seated somewhere. There is however Divine Authority which is based on a Foundation. For these and many more reasons we prefer to translate the word “*kursī*” as Foundation and “ʿarsh” as Divine Authority.]

The Prophet ﷺ continued his blessed narration: “I passed beyond those veils. Between each of the veils, I beheld many amazing things and saw unspeakable sights and I saw numberless strange seas and within them strange and wondrous creatures.

“I saw many angels of dreadful guise, but to comprehend them or describe or explain them exceeds all human means

“After passing through all the veils, I reached the Divine Throne. “When I reached the Divine Throne, I witnessed great events. One drop fell from the Throne into my mouth and the sweetness of it surpassed everything I have ever tasted. When I had swallowed it, the Lord of the Universe enlightened my heart with the knowledge and wisdom of all that had gone before and was yet to come. he light from the Throne surrounded me and I was engulfed by it. I was aware of nothing but that light. When faced with this light, I perceived everything through my heart’s eye as clearly as though I were looking through my eyes. I perceived what was behind me as clearly as that, which was before me, at a level with my chest.

“After all this occurred, I came into a state when I heard absolutely nothing, not the voices of the angels, nor the sound of any other thing. This state of absolute silence caused me to experience great terror. Then I heard the voice of a friend reassuring me.”

This is a very important subject which needs to be well understood: the reason for the Prophet ﷺ proceeding to the Divine Throne was not to see the Allāh ﷻ as Allāh ﷻ is not in from any particular place as we mentioned above. The Prophet ﷺ was taken to these stations in order to witness the entirety of creation, and to see the manifestation of the Supreme Majesty and Power of Allāh ﷻ

لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا

li-nuriyahu min ʾāyātīnā

...that We might show him some of Our Signs...

(al-ʾIsrāʾ 17:1)



لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى

laqadā raʾaya min ʾāyāti rabbihil-kubārā

surely he saw one of the greatest Signs of his Lord

(an-Najm 55:76)

As the Lord of the Worlds Himself here describes a thing as being ‘great’; how *great* then must it be!



Perhaps the Prophet ﷺ has given us only a summary report of what he saw in accordance with the capacity of our minds; most of what he saw he did not reveal to us, for it is not possible to give a description of the greatest things that he witnessed, as our minds are not fully capable of comprehending such things. Therefore, he did not mention those matters; this must be understood.

The Prophet ﷺ continues his account:

“When I reached to the Place of Authority, I wished to remove my sandals, but the Place of Authority spoke to me saying, ‘Oh Beloved of Allah ﷻ, step upon me with your blessed sandal, so that I might take pride in the fact that the dust from the sandal of the Beloved of Allah ﷻ has fallen upon me.’

“Again I tried to remove my sandals, but this time a call came to me from the Divine Being ﷻ saying, ‘Oh My Beloved, do not remove your sandals so that the place of My Authority might be honored and blessed with the dust from the soles of your sandals.’

“I then spoke to my Lord ﷻ, saying, ‘When You called the Prophet Mūsā ؑ to come to the Blessed Valley of Ṭuwā (الْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى) near the mountain of Tur, You ordered him to remove his sandals.’ Again this word came to me from the Divine Person, saying, ‘In My view, you are more cherished and honored than he; Mūsā was My Word (*kalimullāh*), whereas you are My Beloved (*ḥabibullāh*). Look ahead and see what you will see!

“I looked and I saw a great sea, so great that there was no end to it, and no shore in sight. On its near side there was a tree, and upon that tree, there was a bird the size of a dove. In its beak this bird bore a piece of clay as big as a lentil. ‘Do you know what this is?’ I was asked. I answered, ‘My Lord knows best.’ And He ﷻ told me, ‘You are always asking Me to forgive your nation their sins. This sea is the likeness of the Sea of Mercy. That tree signifies the world, the dove-like bird is the likeness of your nation and that bit of clay is the likeness of their sins.

That is the relation of your nation’s sins to the vastness of My Mercy, so let your heart be at rest.”

The secret of that was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ in this ʾāyāt.

فَاسْتَوَى ثَمَرًا فَتَدَلَّى • فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى •  
فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى • مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى •  
أَفَتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَى مَا يَرَى • وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى •

fastawa ṭhumma danā fa-tadallā • fa-kāna qaba qowsayni ʾow ʾadāna •  
fa-ʾowḥāa ʾilā ʾabādihi ma ʾowḥā • ma kadḥaba-l-fuʾādu ma raʾayya •  
ʾafatumāfūnahu ʾala ma yara • wa laqadā raʾaha nazlata ʾukḥra •

He stood poised, on the highest horizon,  
then drew near and suspended hung,  
two bows'-length away, or nearer,  
then He revealed to His servant that He revealed.

His heart lies not of what it saw;  
what, will you dispute with him what he saw?

(an-Najm 53:6-12)

He, the Almighty ﷻ, addressed him in the following words:

“Draw nearer to Me, oh you Best of all Mankind! Draw nigh, oh Ahmad ﷺ, oh Muhammad ﷺ, so that The Friend ﷻ may be in intimate association with His friend!”

In this way, the Prophet ﷺ was granted the unmediated vision of the Sublime Beauty of He who is beyond all space and time, free from all conditions or qualities, the Unmitigated Principal ﷻ behind all things and all beings — of all that was, is and will be.

To continue with the Prophet's ﷺ account:

“When faced with the unparalleled honor of a glimpse of the Divine Beauty, it came to me to express myself in the following words:

At-tahiyyatu li-llahi wa-ṣ-ṣalawatu wa-ṭ-ṭayyibātu.

All praise belong to Allāh and prayers and good things

“Which is to say, ‘All praise, exaltation and worship in speech, all worship through actions and property is due to the Almighty alone, the only One to whom worship is due.’

After I had pronounced these words, the Lord of Might and Glory answered me, saying:

as-salamu ʿalayka ʾayyuha-n-nabiyyu  
wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuḥu;

Peace be upon you oh Prophet  
and the Mercy of Allāh and His Blessings!

“Which is to say, ‘Peace be upon you, oh Prophet; may you be safe from the trouble and difficulties of this world and the next, oh My glorious Prophet! May the Mercy and Blessings of Allāh ﷺ be upon you.’

“In this way, He proffered very special greetings upon me. In response, I said:

as-salāmu ʿalayna wa ʿala ʿibādillāhi-ṣ-ṣaliḥīn;

peace be upon us and [all] the wholehearted devout servants

“Which is to say, ‘May the peace of this world and the next be upon us, for our answering and acceptance of these greetings, upon all us Prophets of the Lord, and upon His wholehearted devout servants, which is the name given to the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ.’

“Jibrīl ﷺ was then informed of this secret colloquy, and from his post he concluded:

ʾashḥadu ʾal-lā ʾilāha illallāhu,  
wa ʾashḥadu anna muḥammadan ʿabāduḥu wa rasūluḥ.

I bear witness that there is no deity but Allāh  
and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His Servant and His Prophet.

“After this, Allāh ﷻ, the Possessor of Majesty and Glory, asked me, ‘Do you know, oh Muḥammad, which actions the inhabitants of the heavens approve of and what they desire to be done?’

“I replied, ‘Oh my Lord, I know nothing, and You know everything; moreover all that is hidden and secret.’

“Again the Lord spoke to me and said, ‘Oh Muḥammad, do you know what actions the heavenly hosts love and approve of?’

“Again I replied, ‘Oh my Lord, I know it not, for You know all things, and you know all that is hidden.’ After this, He in His Grace and Infinite Kindness and Benevolence taught me all the knowledge I was in need of.

“Then again He asked me the same question, ‘Do you know what actions the heavenly hosts rejoice in and are happy to see performed?’ This time I answered, ‘They are happy with works that are performed in compensation for sins committed and with works that lead to raised stations in the Garden – those are the works the heavenly folk rejoice in.’

The Lord of Hosts continued to ask me, ‘And what are these works that are compensation for sins committed?’ I answered, ‘On a cold day, to perform one’s ablutions with cold water and in such a way that one’s limbs are wetted entirely; to walk the distance required to join the prayer in congregation; after having prayed one prayer, to wait for the next; these are actions that are compensation for sins. Whoever performs such work will live his life in goodness and righteousness and only good will be his lot. He will be as pure as on the day his mother brought him into the world.’”

“Whoever persists in these three actions, I pray and plead that his may be a goodly life. May he always be surrounded by goodness and remain as pure as on the day he was born.”

The Prophet ﷺ continued:

“Then my Lord resumed His questioning and said, ‘Which are those actions that lead to high stations in Paradise?’ And I answered, ‘To share food with people and to show hospitality, to give *salām* to a Muslim whom one encounters on the road, to get up for prayer at night when everyone is asleep – these three actions lead to high stations in Paradise.’

“After this the Lord ﷻ said to me, ‘Speak, oh Muḥammad!’ ‘What shall I say, oh my Lord?’ I answered. He said, ‘Recite this *duʿāʾ*.’

*allāhumma inni asʾaluka ʿamalan bi-l-hasanati  
wa tarkan li-l-munkirati,  
wa ʾidḥa aradta bi-qawmin fitnatan wa ana fi-him,  
fa-qbidni ilayka ghayra maftun.*

Oh my Lord, I ask of You to be granted good works  
and to be released from bad actions,  
and should You have decreed disaster for a people  
and I should be among them,  
then take me from their midst before calamity takes its toll.”

The Leader of the World, the Foremost and Elect of all the Sons of Adam ﷺ, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, Muhammad ﷺ thus reached the Station of Nearness (*qurb*) and was granted the vision of Divine Beauty. From the Station of the Knowledge of Certainty (*ʿilm al-yaqīn*), he passed to the Station of the Witnessing of Certainty (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*) through holding direct converse with the Lord of Majesty and Might. His blind faith in the unseen was turned into faith supported by direct witnessing. The Exalted Lord Almighty informs of this in the revelation of this verse of the Holy Quran:

أَمَّنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ

ʾāmana-r-rasūlu bi-mā unzila ʾilayhi mir-rabbih  
the Messenger believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord  
(al-Baqarah 2:285)

The Prophet ﷺ recounts:

“Concerning the above mentioned verse, I said, ‘Yes my Lord, I believe in all that has been revealed aforetime.’ The Lord ﷻ then asked, ‘And who else believed in it?’ I said, ‘And the believers; each one believes in Allāh.’ (al-Baqarah 2:285) The Lord then asked again, ‘And what else do they believe in?’ I replied, ‘And His angels, and His Books and His Messengers. We make no division between any of His Messengers (al-Baqarah 2:285); we accept and confirm them all.’ The Lord then asked, ‘What did the believers say when the revelation came to them with the laws and injunctions from their Lord?’ I answered, ‘They said, ‘We hear, and obey (al-Baqarah 2:285) oh my Lord!’ The Lord ﷻ then said, ‘You have spoken truly, oh Muḥammad, for they have received My Word and pledged obedience to My Commands. Now ask of Me what you wish, it will be granted.’

“To this I said, ‘Oh Lord, grant us Thy Forgiveness; unto Thee is the homecoming. (al-Baqarah 2:285) Admit us to Your Divine Presence having granted us Your Mercy and Forgiveness.’ Thereupon the Almighty replied, ‘I have forgiven you and your nation.’ And after this, the Lord of Majesty and Might spoke:

الْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ  
لَا تَفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ؕ  
وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۖ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

al-muʾminūna kullun ʾāmana bi-llāhi  
wa malāʾikatihi wa kutubih wa rusulih  
lā nufarriqu bayna ʾaḥadi mir-ruslih  
wa qālū samiʿnā wa ʾaṭʿnā  
ghufrānaka rabbana wa ʾilayka-l-maṣir

...all the believers securely believe in Allāh  
and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers.  
We make no distinction between any one of His Messengers.  
The [each] say, “We hear and we obey.”

Grant us forgiveness and unto You is the final destination.  
(al-Baqarah 2:285)

لَا يَكُلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ؕ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

lā yukallifu-llāhu nafsan ʾilla wusʿaha  
lahā mā kasabat wa ʿalayha ma-k-tasabat

Allāh does not burden any soul except with what it can bear  
To it's account is what it has merited [by way of goodness]  
and against it is what it has earned [by way of the evil it did]

(al-Baqarah 2:286)

“And after this, He ﷺ said, ‘Oh Muḥammad, this night is the night of gifts, ask therefore for whatever you wish, it will be granted.’ I then said,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ؕ

rabbanā lā tuʾakhidhnā ʾin-nasīnā ʾaw ʾakhtaʾna

Oh our Lord, do not condemn us if we forget or unwittingly do wrong  
(al-Baqarah 2:286)

“The Lord then said, ‘I have forgiven you and your nation for whatever sins they have committed from heedlessness and forgetfulness. And I have forgiven them the sins that they were forced to commit. So ask again, it will be granted.’ I said,

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا

rabbanā wa ʿa tahmil ʿalaynā ʾiṣraṅ kanā ḥamaltahu miṅ qabālinā

Oh our Lord, do not lay a load on us  
as You burdened those who came before us!  
(al-Baqarah 2:286)

The Prophet ﷺ continued:

“I made supplication for my nation that they might not be burdened with all the weight that previous nations had to bear. My Lord then said to me, ‘I have granted ease to your nation and made their burdens light. So ask of Me what you want, it will be granted.’ Then I said, (in reference to disasters and calamities):

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ

rabbanā wa lā tuḥammilnā mā lā taqata lanā bih

Oh our Lord do not burden us with what we have no strength to bear.  
(al-Baqarah 2:286)

“The Lord answered, ‘I will not place upon you and your nation burdens which exceed their strength to carry them. But ask more of Me, I will grant it.’ ‘I replied, ‘Pardon us!’ (al-Baqarah, 2:286); ‘and He replied, ‘I have pardoned you and your nation.’ ‘Forgive us!’ (al-Baqarah 2:286).’ ‘I have forgiven you and your nation.’”

وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا

## Worship in the month of Rajab & The Story of ʾIsrā wa Mirʿāj

wa-gh-fir lanā wa-r-ḥamnā  
Pardon us! Have Mercy on us!

According to another version, the Prophet ﷺ here explicitly asked for pardon for each and every act of disobedience, to each of which the Lord Almighty replied, “I have forgiven them.”

The Prophet ﷺ continues,

“At last I said, ‘Have mercy on us’, (al-Baqarah 2:286), and the He ﷺ answered, ‘I have mercy on you.’ Then I said, ‘You are our Protector;’ (al-Baqarah 2:286) and He ﷺ said, ‘The Friend and Protector of all believers is Allāh ﷻ, Lord of Might and Glory; the unbelievers have no Protecting Friend.’ Then I said, ‘And help us against the people of the unbelievers’. (al-Baqarah 2:286)

وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا ؕ  
أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

wa-ʿfu ʾannna: wa-gh-fir lanā: wa-r-ḥamna  
ʾaānta mawlanā fa-ñ-ṣurnā ʿala-l-qowmi-l-kafirīn

Pardon us. Forgive Us. Have mercy on us.

You are our Master so aid us against those who cover up the truth.  
(al- Baqarah 2:286)

And the Lord ﷻ replied, ‘Up to the Day of Judgment, I have made you and your nation to be victorious over the unbelievers (*kafirīn* lit. those cover up the truth).’

“The Lord ﷻ then asked again, saying, ‘Oh My Beloved, other than this, if there is anything you should wish for, ask it of Me, for I will grant it to you.’ Thereupon I said, ‘Oh my Lord, you have chosen ʾIbrāhīm ؑ to be Your intimate friend (*khalīl*), and have spoken to Mūsā ؑ without intermediary. To Dāwūd ؑ You ﷻ granted great possessions, and made iron to be soft as wax in his hand; You have made the mountains and its stones and the birds of the air to be subservient to his command, so that they joined him in singing Your praises. As for ʾIdrīs ؑ You have transferred to a most high place.



“To Sulaymān ﷺ You ﷻ gave a kingdom and such possession as no one after him will ever come to possess and enjoy. And You made subservient to him mankind and jinn, the demons and wild beasts, the birds and the winds. And You also taught him the tongues of the birds and the beasts. To ʾIsā You gave knowledge of the Torah and the ʾInjīl, and by his prayer, You made the blind see, the afflicted whole, and the ailing to regain their health; You made him revive the dead, and You made him and his mother safe from the wiles of the devil and gave them protection. What will be the equivalent gift You will make to me?”

“The Lord ﷻ replied to this in all His Grandeur and Majesty, saying, ‘Oh Muḥammad, I have chosen you as My Beloved (*ḥabīb*), just as I chose ʾIbrāhīm as My faithful friend. To be the Beloved of Allāh ﷻ is even more excellent than being His friend. I have also privileged you with the vision of My Divine Beauty, and I have spoken to you without intermediary, even as I spoke to Mūsā ﷻ.’

“Beyond this, I have given you the chapters of the Qurʾān, *al-Fātiḥah* (The Opening) and the end of *al-Baqarah* (The Cow), which are both from the treasure troves of My Divine Throne. These were not given to any Prophet before you, but reserved for you and your nation.

“Also, I have sent you as My Messenger to all the peoples of the world, to mankind and to jinn, be they black or white or of any other color or description; never before have I sent a Prophet with so universal a mission.’

“I have made the whole earth a means of cleansing for your ʾummah. When you find water and are sound enough to perform your ablutions, make Wuḍūʾ (الوضوء) and take your Ghūsl (غسل). But when you do not find water or you have not the strength to wash, you may perform Tayammum (تيمم) and cleanse yourself by means of the dust of the earth.’ I have also made the whole Earth to be as a Masjid (مسجد), a place for prayer, so that wherever you may find yourselves, you may pray and perform your worship.’

“I have made lawful to you and your ʾummah spoils of war, so you may profit from them. To previous nations these were not lawful.’

“And I have strengthened you in that I have cast fear into the heart of your enemy, even if there is a distance of one month’s journey between you and them.’

“I have granted you the right of intercession for whomever you desire. I have sent down to you the greatest and most august of all revealed scriptures, the Glorious Qurʾan. And I have split your breast and removed from you all sinfulness.’

“I have elevated your name, for wherever My Name is mentioned, there your name is pronounced as well.’

• اَلْمُرِيْجِدُكَ يَتِيْمًا فَاَوْىٰ • وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدٰى •  
• وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَاَغْنٰى •

ʾalam yajidāka yatīman fa-āwa • wa wajadaka ḍāāāllan fahdadā •  
wa wajaka ʿāāʾilan faʾaghna

Did We not find you and orphan and give you refuge?

And did We not find you astray and guide you?

And did We not find you without means and provided sustenance.

(aḍ-Ḍuḥā 93:6-8)

“When the Lord ﷻ had spoken to me thus, all I could answer was, ‘Yes, my Lord, all these great favors You have bestowed upon me and honored me beyond all measure.’

“Then the Lord ﷻ spoke again and said, ‘Among all the people belonging to your ʾummah, I have made one group in whose hearts resides the Holy Quran. This was not given to other nations before yours; they did not commit to memory the books their prophets brought to them. This privilege I have reserved for your nation alone. I have made your nation more excellent than all previous nations; your ʾummah is the ʾummah of the middle way (اُمَّةٌ وَسَطٌ), and an ʾummah that calls for justice (*adl* / عدل).’

“You I have created before anything else, and I have sent you on your prophetic mission as the last of all the Prophets ﷺ. I have given you to drink from the waters of *Kawthar* (abundance), and I have given you eight shares.

“These are: Islam, the *Hijra* (migration), war against ignorance, Ṣalāt (ritual prayer), Zakāt (obligatory payments to the poor), the fast of Ramaḍān, enjoining good and discouraging evil (‘*amr-bil-maʿrūf wa nahiy-ʿani-l-munkar*).’”

“After the Lord ﷻ stopped speaking, I asked Him, ‘Oh my Lord, after I had passed and seen all of creation, I experienced a moment of extreme terror.

“The Lord then answered me, When you were in the grip of awesome terror, We created an angel for you in the shape and form of a friend and gave him a voice and tone with which to speak to you, so that you might feel the comfort of that familiarity when you heard him speak. Then the awesomeness and terror left you entirely, and so that you were not totally overcome by the majesty of this revelation and were able to ask what you wish from the Divine Essence. By means of this familiarity you were able to speak normally and without dread. ‘Indeed, I have no need to turn to any in prayer, but recite the verse which I have revealed unto you:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ  
وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

huwa-l-ladhī yuṣalli ʿalaykum wa malāʾiktuhu  
li-yukhrijakum min a ḍhulamati ʾila-n-nūr  
wa kāna bu-l-muʾminīna raḥimā

It is He who blesses you and His Angels  
that He might you forth from the darkness to the light  
And He is Singularly Compassionate to the believers.

(al-ʾAḥzāb 33:43)

“This verse will teach you that the meaning of My prayer is nothing but Mercy for you and for your nation.

“I have in My Divine Majesty made Myself free from all defect and weakness, and My Mercy outstrips My Wrath.

“Therefore, state your wishes, and ask of Me whatever you need and desire.”

“After these words, the Lord added, ‘What of Jibrīl’s ﷺ request, which he asked you to make?’ I replied, ‘Oh my Lord, You are the All-Knowing; there is no need to speak of it, as You know already, all Bounty and Munificence being Yours.’ The Lord replied to this, ‘I will grant his request and fulfill his wish.

“On the Day of Judgment when your nation prepares to cross the Bridge of Sirat, let them take a hold of his wing and so cross with ease on the wing of Jibrīl ﷺ. Only the ones who loved you and your companions will cross with ease; I grant My Divine Sanction.’

“To this I rejoined, ‘Oh Lord, you have sent punishment upon the nations that went before mine in many and varied forms. There were some upon whom You sent a rain of stones to destroy them; while others you drowned in the waters. Some were destroyed by Jibrīl’s ﷺ shout, and some You caused the Earth to swallow. Some perished when You sent against them a rain of fire, and others died in a harsh, bitter wind.

“Oh Lord, what will become of my ʾummah after I have gone?”

“The Lord of Mercy and Munificence, the Lord of the Universe then intoned in all His Majesty and Splendor, ‘My Wrath has been spent on those nations before you but upon your ʾummah I will shower only Mercy. I will transform their badness into good actions. To the corrupt among them I will grant the gift of repentance, and bring them into a good state of being. I will deliver them from their bad traits and help them acquire good characteristics. I will rid them of their ignorance and change their minds to understanding and perfect knowledge.

“Whoever calls upon Me, saying, ‘Oh My Lord!’ and turns to Me with true humility in his heart, to him I will answer, ‘I am at your service, oh My servant; tell Me what it is that you desire, and I will create it.

““To you I give the right of intercession for your ʾummah

““Oh Muḥammad, you may be the advocate on their behalf, and I pledge to accept all your intercessions.’

“And then He ﷺ said, ‘Oh Muḥammad, I have not made your ʾummah excessively wealthy, so that their accounts will not be overly long. And I have not made their bodies very great, so that they might not require much of worldly food and drink and dress. I have not made their lives to be exceedingly long, so that their hearts might not be blackened by pride in reliance upon a long lifespan and that they might always be aware of death and make their preparations for the afterlife that follows. I have not made death to come to them suddenly, but I have made illness precede it and provide a cause, so that they might not meet with a sudden death when they have plunged and sunk in the sea of heedlessness. When they fall ill, they repent of their sins, they pay their debts, they try to make up for past mistakes and shortcomings, and they make their last will and testament. I have brought them into the world after every other nation, so that their time in the grave might be of short duration; they will remain trapped in their tombs only until all the people of their nation have come and gone. When that is done, their time is up and they will attain to their blissful stations in the Garden, enjoying its undying delights.’

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Oh Muḥammad, sometimes your ʾummah will be obedient to Me, at other times they will be rebellious. Their obedience to Me meets with My Pleasure, and to Me are acceptable all their works, which accord to My Good Pleasure; I forgive them their minor misdoings and accord to them generous recompense. For I am the All-Bountiful, and I show Myself to them in My aspect of Bounty. The disobedient among them are subject to My Judgment; but because it is the Judgment of past eternity, I forgive them their disobedience, for I am the All-Merciful, and I show them My Mercy.’

“And then He said, ‘Oh Muḥammad, say to your ʾummah: ‘The Lord Almighty says to you: just as you love a person that shows you loving kindness and generosity, I am much more deserving of your love and affection than any other in this world. I have created you when you were naught and I have given you a pleasing form and I continue to ceaselessly shower you with innumerable blessings.

“Not a moment passes in which I do not bestow upon you a new form of goodness. Therefore you ought to love Me more than any other, obeying My Commands and submitting to My Law.’

“And again, He Almighty says to you, ‘If you are going to fear anything that dwells between Heaven and earth, it is I whom you ought to fear more than any, for My Power pervades all and everything. My chastisement is violent and swift, no one can flee or hide from it, or run to another master in order to save himself from Me, for no one has such powers. As this is the reality, you must beware of acting contrary to My wishes and commands.’

“And the Lord said, ‘If you are going to ask of any, I am most worthy of being asked, for it is I alone who accepts all prayers of need and fulfills all wants.’ And He says: ‘You feel shame and regret when you have ill-treated someone or been unkind, whereas I am the most deserving of your shame and remorse, for I have brought you into being when you were naught and to this very moment I have heaped upon you endless gifts and blessings. I have made you safe from all manner of affliction, and yet you disregard My injunctions and do what I have forbidden to you. Therefore, contrition is your due and restraint from actions that I have prohibited. Obey Me and My Commands!’

“And the Lord addresses Himself to you, saying, ‘If you choose for reasons of personal and covetous choice, I am the most deserving of your preference, for I am your Creator, and your Provider, and the only object of your worship. Therefore, turn to Me, worshipful, in your actions and with meritorious conduct.’ All this He ﷻ, the Almighty has commanded me to expound to you.’

“Then Allāh ﷻ complained to me about my ʾummah. One of His objections was this: ‘I do not ask of them to perform anything ahead of time, all I ask is for them to do what they should in its own time. But, by contrast, they ask of Me to provide them ahead of time. While I have provided them perfectly for so many years, they are not satisfied, even though they do not know whether their lives will last long enough to use up what they have been given.’

“Even so, their greed for the things of this world is ever increasing, and they complain of not having enough and are always asking for more. Do they not observe the birds in the sky? Every morning the birds of the fields leave their nests with empty stomachs to return in the evenings having eaten their fill, though the whole world be covered in snow. Does not your nation take a lesson from this? While the whole world is covered in snow and not a speck of earth is to be seen, It is He who provides the birds with their shares, will He not provide them also with their own portions? Why does your ʾummah not place their reliance on Him who has forever guaranteed their subsistence?

“The second complaint is this: ‘I do not give their provisions to any other than them; in spite of this, they perform actions for the sake of other than Me (that is to say, they behave hypocritically).

“My third complaint is this: While they are consuming the portions that I have provided for them, their gratitude goes out to someone else. They will say, for instance, ‘In my vineyard I had a harvest such an amount and from my fields such an amount, from my trade so much.’ But was it not I who caused the vines to grow in his vineyard and the crops in his field, and who gave him success in his commerce? Why do they remember Me not and mention not My Name when they speak of the yields of their vineyards and fields, and the profits of their trade? Wherefrom is this heedlessness; do they feel no shame?’

“And My fourth complaint is this: Mine is all Might and Glory; it is I who grants Honor in this world, in the grave and in the world to come. Even so, they still look to honors coming from other sources. They will say, for instance, ‘Were I only to occupy high office, I would surely grow very rich.’

“Thus they expect honor to come to them through riches and high office, whereas all these are only of a passing nature. When death comes to them, all connection ceases. Does that signal true honor? It is My Command, by which they must abide, it is I who give them Honor and Dignity in this world and the next.’

“My fifth complaint against them is this: I have created Hell for the unbelievers. Why is it that they persist in performing actions that will land them in Hellfire?”

“To these charges against my ʾummah, I replied, ‘Oh my Lord, Your Word is true, my ʾummah is guilty of all that You have laid against it. But You are He, the One who covers all shame and forgives all sins; You are the Supremely Rich and Generous, the Clement and All-Forgiving Lord (*ar-raʿuf wa-r-raḥīm*). In Your Infinite Grace and Kindness, forgive them their failings, conceal their disgrace, and in Your Endless Benevolence, pardon their great and small sins! Let them be overtaken by Your Boundless Mercy and with Your All-Gracious Merciful Compassion lead them into the Paradise, oh My Lord!’

“In answer to this supplication, the Lord ﷻ the Almighty said to me, ‘Had your ʾummah not been so sinful, I would have created a nation of sinners, so that I might make Myself known as the Forgiver of Sins in that I granted them forgiveness. Oh Muḥammad, You are My Beloved, as you are My servant. All Creation I have brought into being for your sake alone. Because of the sins of your ʾummah, I have created My Oceans of Mercy. Oh Muḥammad, regard the high station of honor and dignity you have been granted, in that you are honored by an encounter with My Divine Beauty. I have granted you direct intercourse with My Divine Person, without interpreter or intermediary. Whoever is acceptable to you is also acceptable to Me, and he who refuses you, is refused by Me, too.’

“Then He said, ‘Indeed, you will be the first of all the Prophets to enter Paradise, and no Prophet can enter it before you. Your nation will be the first nation to enter Paradise and no other nation will be admitted before they have gone in.’

“After this He said, ‘Oh Muḥammad, set not your hopes on any nation of mankind, for they have nothing at all. Let your hopes always be pinned on Me and let your talk be with Me, for to Me is your return. Do not become attached to this world in your heart, for I have not created you for this world.’



“Then He Almighty said, ‘Oh Muḥammad, of your ʾummah I have forgiven one third for your sake; another third I will forgive on the Day of Judgment, so that the high regard and station you occupy in My Regard may become clear to all creation on the Day of Gathering, oh Muḥammad.’

“After this, the Almighty informed me of a great many weighty and important matters, but He denied me permission to divulge this knowledge to you.

“It was made obligatory upon my ʾummah to pray fifty times during one day and one night and to make ablutions for major impurity seven times, and to wash a defiled piece of clothing seven times. He commanded me to make these conditions known to my ummah in His Name. I then replied, ‘Everyone who comes home from a journey, brings presents for those who remained at home; therefore, give me something to take back to my ummah as a present.’ The Lord Almighty then said, ‘One of the gifts to your ʾummah is this: as long as they reside in the world, I will be their Helper; I will protect them from disaster and calamity and I will grant success to their good actions. I will grant them various favors. When they pray to Me, I will accept their prayers, I will protect them from what they fear and I will grant them what they desire.

“Another gift to your ʾummah is this: When their lives come to an end, I will be their Helper. I will protect them from the wiles of Shaytan and I will give them tidings of the Garden and show them their stations within it. I will make it easy for them to draw their last breath and I will help them pass over into the Hereafter in safety.

“Another gift to your ʾummah is this: When they are placed within their graves, I shall be their only Helper. I will release them from the darkness and oppression of the grave; I will lighten their tombs and make them spacious and wide. I will assist them in answering the questions of the angels Munkar and Nakir and I will make their tombs to be as a Garden of Paradise.

“Another gift to your ʾummah is this: When they arise from their graves, I will be their sole Helper.

“I will raise them from their tombs and make them to have faces of light and clothe them in garments from Paradise. I will help them mount upon their steeds and lead them to the site of the Gathering with an entourage of angels in a display of splendor and grace. I will spare them the terror of that Dire Day. I will lead them underneath your banner and give them to drink of the waters of the Pool of Kawthar. I will make them to be close associates and companions of the prophets, messengers, saints and martyrs and the righteous whom I have favored with a place beneath the shadow of My Divine Authority (*ʿarsh*). After having been given many special favors from Paradise, their books of reckoning will be placed in their right hands, and their accounts will be made light and their scales of the balance made heavy for them. I will help them cross the Bridge of Sirat with lightness and ease and lead them into the highest gardens of Paradise in the Boundlessness of My Grace.”

“The Lord ﷻ the Almighty then said to me, ‘Oh Muḥammad, of all created beings, you are the one who has reached the highest honors. On the Day of Resurrection I will give you such great honors as will stupefy the whole world with wonderment. Oh Muhammad, do you wish to behold what I have prepared for your nation?’ I replied, ‘Oh Lord, I wish to see it, yes.’ He then said, ‘My trusted servant, the angel Jibrīl ﷺ will show it to you.’

“As soon as I returned from there, *Raḥraf* came into view. I seated myself upon him and he carried me down. I descended as far as the Sidrat-al-Muntaha where I met with Jibrīl ﷺ who said to me, ‘Good tidings to you, oh Muḥammad ﷺ, for you have been chosen as the best of all Creation, the foremost of all Prophets and Messengers. The Lord Almighty has greeted and honored you as He has not honored any other created being, neither from among His Prophets or His Messengers, nor from among His Angels brought Near.’

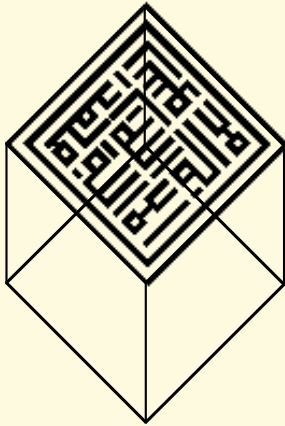
“Then Jibrīl ﷺ said to me, ‘Come with me, for I am going to show you Paradise.’”



And here we will have to stop as time grows short. ʾinshāʾ Allāh we will have a chance next year to complete the story of the Mirʿāj.

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